5: Harrison D-4 (1912-1924) 1924 M1 Middle East
Bedouin M34

where wells are somewhat close together and the for- 312
age of the country allows it, goats can be kept, but these 283
must be watered at least once a day. They furnish hair 342
for tent-cloth, and thus it is the goat that shelters the
Bedouin from the elements. In districts where forage [234 439]
and water are still more abundant, sheep are raised,
chiefly for their wool or as articles of export. Mutton is 262
the favorite meat all over Arabia, and although for a les- 514
ser occasion goats or camels may answer, when a great
sheikh gives a feast, sheep are the animals slaughtered.

Much has been written, and justly, about the beauty 231
and the endurance of Arabian horses, but they are not an 556
economic asset. In Central Arabia a horse is a pure lux-
ury. Often in summer they must live on camel's milk
just as humans do. They are kept and treated as house-
hold pets and are very intelligent and affectionate. Their
only function is to furnish an aristocratic mount for
pleasure, for state occasions and for war. During part
of the year there is abundant pasturage for them, but
they are a luxury afforded only by the sheikhs and the
very rich and their number is small.

There are years in Arabia when the spring rains fail 731
partially or completely, and then the animals die by thou- 789
sands, or are driven to the nearest town to be sold for a 262
song. In such years starvation stalks abroad through the
land. Little children die because there is no food suit-
able for such tender stomachs, and the adults are even
more gaunt and thin than usual. The sheikhs are nearly
bankrupted by the number of poor they have to feed,
and the whole community waits and prays for more rain
the coming spring.

At the best the life of a desert Bedouin is one of a 511
poverty so bitter and deep that Westerners have little idea
of it. The entire outfit of a family could be bought for a
mere trifle.